

Post-Secondary Education



Post-secondary education is an optional level of study beyond high school. Society encourages middle and high school students to further their education. For those already in the workforce, post-secondary education provides an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills in order to obtain a different job or advance in one already chosen. There are many different kinds of post-secondary education, such as four-year college degree programs or graduate study programs at large universities. Professional or vocational schools, broadly defined, are aimed at creating professionals in a specific field such as business, computer science, law or medicine.

One of Utah's fastest-growing industries in the education services sector is for-profit educational colleges and trade schools. These schools teach new skills or refine existing skills to prepare individuals to succeed in a specific field. This sector generally offers more certificates and two-year degrees than four-year degrees.

Over the past ten years, the number of these institutions as well as the number of enrollments in these institutions have soared. The number of private establishments in Utah rose from 640 in 2001 to 1,186 in 2011, with annual average employment rising from 26,567 to 36,094 (this includes both for-profit and

not-for-profit). The number of public establishments rose from 39 in 2001 to only 56 in 2011, with annual average employment rising from 31,360 to 37,952. While there was a large increase in the number of private establishments, annual average employment ended up being similar in both sectors by 2011.

The recession has made Utahns who are more anxious about weak job prospects look in different directions. Weaker job prospects give for-profit colleges and trade schools opportunities to grow and succeed because they supply job training that may provide individuals with a way out of economic grief. However, it does come at a price; although printed for-profit tuition is generally half of what private university counterparts ask, it is still much higher than tuition in the public sector. However, what is attractive about trade schools is that they interest individuals who are looking for something other than traditional schooling or individuals who are unemployed and want to learn new trade skills.

Regardless of individual intent, the end goal of post-secondary education is to make a person's life more fulfilling. The people who seem to be the happiest in their work are those who have trained for vocations that provide them with abundant satisfaction and enough income to feel stable. ①